



DRAGON KINGS

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Athas is a world ravaged by sorcery and the blistering rays of a crimson sun. Savage halfling headhunters and nomadic elven raiders eke out a living in the desolate wilderness alongside deadly psionic predators. Amid the barren wastelands lie a handful of scattered city-states, each bleeding in the grip of a tyrannical sorcerer-king. These powerful despots placate restless mobs with bread and circuses—the arenas overflowing with spectators seeking release from their harsh lives. Those who do not have the cunning to face life on Athas perish, leaving nothing but bones bleached white under the rays of the dark sun. Athas is a land of deadly magic and powerful psionics that offers few promises of glory or prosperity.

World-shaking events have sent tremors throughout the Tablelands and have liberated some city-states from the iron grip of their tyrant rulers, throwing them into chaos and bloody civil war. Whispers of the dawning of a new age are in the air, spreading like plague. Templars of the remaining despots mercilessly strike down insurrection, as their brutal servants eagerly make examples of the unruly. Protecting their own positions with dark magic and psionics, the surviving sorcerer-kings represent the pinnacle of power on Athas—dragonhood.

Who will rise to challenge them?

ATHASIAN DRAGON

The Dragon of Tyr is a creature feared by all Athasians. A reptilian beast that leaves death and destruction in its wake, it visits the city-states every year, claiming a



THE WORLD OF ATHAS

Do you want to know more about DARK SUN? DRAGON #319 features roughly 30 pages of rules and background information to update DARK SUN to the revised third edition rules set. Also, make sure to visit the official DARK SUN website at athas.org or take part in the fan community discussions over at wizards.com/boards.

levy of a thousand lives to fuel its powerful spells. While legends only speak of one Dragon, in truth Athas has several powerful villains undergoing—or seeking to undergo—a metamorphosis that culminates in dragonhood.

Athasian dragons are arcane spellcasters and psionic manifesters. The majority of known dragons multiclass as wizard/psions, while others live as psychic warriors. It is not unusual for an Athasian dragon to possess levels in other classes that augment its already impressive mental abilities. The quickest path to dragonhood involves taking levels in the cerebremancer prestige class (see page 141 of the *Expanded Psionics Handbook*).

Powerful beings who scheme and work to achieve more power, the existing Athasian dragons guard their positions fanatically, and upstart fledgling dragons rarely risk attracting their wrath. Occasionally, an Athasian dragon manipulates adventurers to fulfill its goals, or sometimes it does so simply to amuse itself.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become an Athasian dragon, a character must fulfill all of the following criteria:

Race: Any living humanoid.

Alignment: Any nongood.

Skills: Knowledge (arcana) 24 ranks, Knowledge (psionics) 24 ranks.

Feats: Epic Spellcasting, Great Fortitude, any two metamagic feats, and any two metapsionic feats.

OF EPIC PROPORTIONS

The Athasian dragon is an epic prestige class. Epic characters, as introduced in the *Epic Level Handbook*, can do things normal characters can only dream of. The rules also treat them a little differently. All epic characters accrue base attack bonuses and base save bonuses at the same rate, so epic classes and epic prestige classes do not list these factors any longer. An epic character's base attack bonus increases at +1 per two levels beyond 20th level, regardless of the epic character's class. The epic character has a +0 base save bonus at 21st level, but thereafter his bonus increases every two levels (+1 at 22nd and 23rd levels, +2 at 24th and 25th, and so on).

The Epic Spellcasting feat allows the spellcaster to cast more spells per day beyond his class's normal maximum.

Spells: Must be able to cast 9th-level arcane spells and manifest 6th-level psionic powers.

Special: Must perform a ritual that requires a sacrifice of no less than 1,000 HD of living creatures and 50,000 gp.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the Athasian dragon prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency:

The Athasian dragon gains no new weapon or armor proficiency.

Dragon Magic: By combining his knowledge of psionics and arcane magic, an Athasian dragon learns how to use the life energy of those around him to aid his epic spellcasting. When casting an epic spell with the backlash mitigating factor the Athasian dragon can drain up to 10 hit points from one living creature per Athasian dragon level as a free action. The creatures drained must be within close range (25 feet + 5 feet per 2 spellcaster levels). If the spell takes more than 1 round to cast, the Athasian dragon may select different creatures to drain each round. The total number of hit points drained in this manner cannot exceed the amount of backlash damage dealt to the Athasian dragon by the epic spell.

A living creature drained in this manner must make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + Athasian dragon class level + Constitution modifier) or permanently loses the drained hit points (its hit point total

permanently drops by 10 hit points, to a minimum of 1 hp per HD). If the 10 points of damage kills a creature and it is brought back to life it automatically loses at least 1 level, regardless of the spell used to return it to life. If the spell used to return it to life normally penalizes the recipient 1 level a creature killed by this ability loses 2 levels instead.

For example, a 6th-level Athasian dragon casts an epic spell dealing 10d6 points of backlash damage and takes 55 points of backlash damage. He may drain up to 60 hit points, spread among six creatures in close range, each creature taking 10 hit points. The Athasian dragon offsets 60 hit points, with 5 drained hit points dissipating. If there were only three living creatures within range, the Athasian dragon could only drain 30 hit points and would take 25 hit points of backlash damage.

Metamorphosis: Upon beginning the transformation process, the Athasian dragon takes on some aspects of the dragon type. He gains darkvision out to 60 feet and low-light vision. In addition, he becomes immune to magical sleep and paralysis effects, and he gains a natural armor bonus equal to his Athasian dragon level.

Polyglot: The Athasian dragon gains the Polyglot feat (*Epic Level Handbook*, page 65) as a bonus feat, even if he does not meet its prerequisites.

Spells per Day/Powers Known: At 2nd level and a number of other levels thereafter, the Athasian dragon gains new spells per day (and spells

The Athasian Dragon**Hit Dice: d12**

Level	Special	Spells per Day
1st	Dragon magic, metamorphosis, Polyglot	—
2nd	Bonus feat, claws	+1 level of existing arcane or manifestor class
3rd	Ageless	+1 level of existing arcane or manifestor class
4th	Bite, growth	—
5th	Burrow, tail	+1 level of existing arcane or manifestor class
6th	Bonus feat, frightful presence	+1 level of existing arcane or manifestor class
7th	Breath weapon	—
8th	Wings	+1 level of existing arcane or manifestor class
9th	Resistance	+1 level of existing arcane or manifestor class
10th	Bonus feat, growth	—

Class Skills (2 + Intelligence modifier per level): The Athasian dragon's class skills (and key ability for each skill) are Bluff (Cha), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Decipher Script (Int), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (all skills, taken individually) (Int), Listen (Wis), Profession (Wis), Psicraft (Wis), Spellcraft (Int), and Spot (Wis).

known, if applicable) or new power points (and powers known, if applicable) as if he had also gained a level in an arcane spellcasting or manifesting class to which he belonged before adding the prestige class level. If already an epic spellcaster, the character gains only the benefit noted under the Spells or Powers entry for that epic class. He does not, however, gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained (bonus metamagic, metamagic, or item creation feats, psionic special abilities, and so on). At each level that grants this ability, the character must decide to which class he adds the new level for the purpose of determining spells per day and caster level or power points per day, powers known, and manifestor level.

Bonus Feat: At 2nd level, and every four levels thereafter, the Athasian dragon gains a bonus epic feat from the following list (see the *Epic Level Handbook* for descriptions): Arcane Augmentation*, Armor Skin, Damage Reduction, Epic Fortitude,

Epic Psionic Focus, Epic Skill Focus (Knowledge [arcana]), Epic Skill Focus (Knowledge [psionics]), Epic Spell Focus, Epic Spell Penetration, Epic Toughness, Fast Healing, Great Constitution, Great Intelligence, Great Strength, Improved Combat Casting, Improved Manifestation, Improved Spell Capacity, Improved Spell Resistance, Metamixture*, Penetrate Damage Reduction, Power Knowledge, Spell Knowledge.

*New feat, see below.

Claws: At 2nd level, the Athasian dragon's hands harden into claws. The Athasian dragon gains two claw attacks as primary natural attacks. The Athasian dragon's claw attacks deal the same amount of damage as those of a true dragon of the same size.

Ageless: Beginning at 3rd level, the Athasian dragon does not age. All age-related ability score penalties and bonuses prior to becoming an Athasian dragon remain, but he no longer takes ability score penalties or gains bonuses for aging.

Athasian dragons are immune to the ravages of time.

Bite: At 4th level, the Athasian dragon's face extends into a pronounced snout. He gains a bite attack as a primary natural attack. The Athasian dragon's bite attack deals the same amount of damage as that of a true dragon of the same size.

Growth: At 4th level, and again at 10th level, the Athasian dragon grows by one size category. He gains all bonuses and penalties inherent to the size transformation (see page 291 of the *Monster Manual* for details). Damage dealt by all natural attacks also increases, as per the table on page 69 of the *Monster Manual*. An Athasian dragon growing from Medium to Large gains +8 Strength and +4 Constitution, his natural armor bonus increases by +2, but his Dexterity drops by -2 and he takes a -1 size penalty to Armor Class and on attack bonuses. From Large to Huge the dragon gains an additional +8 Strength and +4 Constitution, his natural armor bonus increases by another +1 (for a total of +3 increase due to size), but his Dexterity drops by another -2 and his size penalty increases to -2.

Burrow: At 5th level, the Athasian dragon can burrow. Its burrow speed equals half its base land speed.

Tail: At 5th level, the Athasian dragon also grows a tail. A Large or larger Athasian dragon also gains a tail slap attack. A Gargantuan or larger Athasian dragon gains a tail sweep attack. The Athasian dragon's tail slap and tail sweep attacks deal the same amount of damage as those of a true dragon of the same size.

Frightful Presence (Ex): At 6th level, the Athasian dragon gains the frightful presence ability, as a dragon. This ability has a radius of 30 feet per Athasian dragon level and affects creatures with fewer Hit Dice than the Athasian dragon. A creature that succeeds on a Will save (DC 10 + 1/2 character level + Charisma modifier) becomes

immune to that Athasian dragon's frightful presence for 24 hours. On a failure, creatures with 4 or fewer HD become panicked for 4d6 rounds and those with 5 or more HD become shaken for 4d6 rounds. Athasian dragons ignore the frightful presence of other Athasian dragons.

Breath Weapon: At 7th level, the Athasian dragon gains a single breath weapon: a superheated cone of sand that deals 1d12 points of damage per Athasian dragon level. The damage dealt is half fire and half piercing. The area of effect is equivalent to that of a true dragon of the same size. Creatures caught in the area of effect can attempt Reflex saves to take half damage (DC 10 + 1/2 Athasian dragon level + Constitution modifier). Just like a true dragon, the Athasian dragon can use his breath weapon at will, but he must wait 1d4 rounds between uses.

Wings: At 8th level, the Athasian dragon sprouts wings and gains a fly speed. An Athasian dragon size Huge or smaller has a fly speed of 150 feet and one size Gargantuan or larger has a fly speed of 200 feet. Regardless of size, the Athasian dragon has poor maneuverability. In addition, he gains two wing attacks as secondary natural attacks. The Athasian dragon's wing attacks deal the same amount of damage as those of a true dragon of the same size.

Resistance: A 9th level the Athasian dragon gains spell resistance and power resistance equal to 11 + its character level.

EX-ATHASIAN DRAGONS

An epic spell is required to raise an Athasian dragon, should he die. If an Athasian dragon becomes undead, the transformation is halted and the character may no longer advance in the Athasian dragon class, although he retains all abilities from Athasian dragon levels he gained prior to undeath.

THE CHANGE

Upon performing the ritual that starts advancement as an Athasian dragon, the character begins a process of growth and change that culminates with the character becoming a full Athasian dragon at 10th level. At each level, the dragon molts, shedding his old skin and emerging in his new, larger form.

The exact transformation that each dragon undergoes varies. The first four stages are usually marked by dramatic change, where the dragon becomes less and less recognizably humanoid. His neck stretches and lifts his head far from his body, his limbs lengthen, and his face becomes a long snout. Scales gradually appear all over the new dragon's body, and a tail begins to form.

The period of growth beginning at 4th level and ending at 10th level is marked by excruciating pain. Called the "animalistic rampage," the dragon is so wracked by pain that he can think of little else to do but lash out and cause as much destruction as possible. This constant pain drove the first dragon, Borys, into an insane rage.

During this time, a Dungeon Master might opt to take control of the Athasian dragon occasionally, reflecting the lack of self-control the dragon suffers during the transformation process.

At 10th level, the transformation is complete. The pain of the transformation passes, and although the dragon continues to grow, as a normal dragon, it is a natural process that no longer causes pain.

NEW FEATS

Athasian dragons have developed techniques and abilities unique to themselves.

ARCANE AUGMENTATION (EPIC)

You can spend spell slots to augment psionic powers.

Prerequisite: Dragon magic class feature.

Benefit: You can spend an arcane spell slot to increase

your manifester level limit for augmenting psionic powers during manifestation. Using Arcane Augmentation is a free action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity. Add the level of the spell slot spent to your manifester level for purposes of determining the maximum amount of power points you can spend while manifesting a single power. These additional power points may only be used to augment a psionic power, and may not be used to apply metapsionic feats.

METAMIXTURE (EPIC)

Choose a metapsionic feat. You can modify your spells with the chosen metapsionic feat.

Prerequisite: Dragon magic class feature

Benefit: You can now apply the chosen metapsionic feat to spells in order to modify them as if using a metamagic feat of the same type. For example, you could use Maximize Power to maximize the variable numeric effects of a spell. Using Metamixture is a free action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity. You must spend power points as normal when using a metapsionic feat to boost a spell. Treat the spell as a psionic power of equivalent level for the purpose of determining the power point cost. You cannot spend more power points in this fashion than your manifester level. If a metapsionic feat has the same effect as a metamagic feat already applied to the spell, there is no additional effect.

Special: This feat may be taken multiple times. Each time you take the feat, it applies to a different metapsionic feat. More than one metapsionic feat may be applied to a spell using Metamixture. You still cannot spend more power points than your manifester level when boosting the effects of a spell with multiple metapsionic feats affected by Metamixture. 